

SUPERINTENDENT'S JULY 2023 REPORT

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

The Spring that never happened officially ended in June. Very dry and warm conditions meant a significant change from normal operations. Mowing slowed to a crawl, which allowed us to allocate resources towards watering key areas, chasing down loose goats, and additional invasive removal operations. Staff also had to contend with some very poor air quality days as well. The Pool did open in June and has been operating with significant attendance given the warm weather. Golf continues to be ahead of last year's pace and the outlook for the season is a good one, both financially and in the provision of affordable recreational opportunities. Parks Alive also started in June with a successful event at Leopold Park. Reservations for parties and events are at an all-time high and we continue to see a significant increase in daily use in many of our parks.

A key focus for the Division moving forward is to develop and better connect services with key performance indicators. One reasonably good measure of our work is the The Trust for Public Land ParkScore. The ParkScore is annual ranking of the 100 most populous U.S. cities' park systems. We ranked 13th on the list again in 2023, which is a tie with Denver. The categories used to rank the park systems are: Equity, Access, Investment, Amenities, and Acreage. The 2023 ParkScore Index has given Madison the following scores. Details for each score can be found [here](#).

- Equity: 73
- Access: 93
- Investment: 54
- Amenities: 73
- Acreage: 55

The scores mean that 95% of Madison residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, which is much higher than the national median of 55%. However, the equity score could be improved if residents in low-income neighborhoods had more access to park space. We could also improve our investment score by increasing the total park investment (both public and private funding), with a score of 54 we are at about average for the 100 most populous cities.

Future Commission Items

- Golf Enterprise Update – The Golf Team is working to prepare a report to the Golf Subcommittee, Facilities Programs and Fees Subcommittee, and the Board of Park Commissioners on the past 2 years of operations as well as an outlook on future opportunities to continue to implement the Task Force on Municipal Golf in Madison Parks' recommendations. Given recent staff departures and budget actions, the goal is to present additional information to the BPC between in September.
- Results Madison / Division Work Plan– The City has been working on Results Madison, which moves towards a more significant utilization of data in decision-making, including budgeting for the past few years. Staff will be preparing information on this and the Parks Division's work plan to present to the Commission. The goal is to present information to the Commission in the Fall.

Personnel Updates

Promotions/Hires:

- Scott Nelson was hired as Land Stewardship Technician on the Parks Ecology Team. He started on June 12, 2023.
- John Weichelt was hired as the Parks Division's Volunteer Coordinator. He started on June 26, 2023.
- Jonathan Sutherland was hired as Facility Maintenance Worker position at Olbrich Botanical Gardens. He started on May 30, 2023.
- Will Rogeberg was promoted from Parks Laborer to Parks Maintenance Worker in West Parks. He started in his new role on June 26, 2023.

Departures:

- James VanSickle has resigned from his position as Athletic Field Leadworker in East Parks.

Section reports

Parks Operations

Conservation:

- Resumed prescribed grazing for the season, with goats starting at Turville and Acewood. Volunteers provided assistance with daily paddock checks.
- Worked on controlling various invasive species including Himalayan pokeweed, Japanese hops, knotweed, buckthorn, sweet clover, wild parsnip, and others, at Acewood, Cherokee Marsh, Knollwood, Owen, Prairie Ridge and Turville. They also planted native shrubs at Acewood, Owen and Turville.
- Continued contractor supported work with invasive species control projects at Kettle Pond and Owen.
- Hosted a volunteer workday at Stricker's Pond, and hosted students at Turville Point for their day of service associated with the Future Farmers of America state convention.

Construction:

- Installed new basketball poles and hoops at Berkley Park and a bike rack at Hoyt Park. Also installed bench pads in preparation for memorial benches at Hoyt, Warner, and Burrows parks.
- Completed playground inspections and maintenance work, and readied the rubber mulch for the planned playground replacements.
- Added new sand to the Brittingham Park volleyball courts and spent several days shredding topsoil.

Facilities:

- Supported work orders, inspections, and monitoring of pools, splash pads, and fountains.
- Supported capital projects by removing hardware from the Brittingham Boathouse to prepare for painting, painting the Elver athletics shelter, and constructing a trellis at Olbrich Gardens.
- Completed sign construction for the clubhouse at The Glen, and for the Warner and Brittingham playgrounds.

General Parks:

- Performed additional invasive and noxious plant removals across the park system with less mowing due to the dry weather.
- Supported event preparation including the annual Juneteenth celebration at Penn Park, the three day long Sessions at McPike Park concerts, and Summer Breeze at Olbrich Gardens.
- Supported volunteers from Spectrum Brands in removing invasive brush and installing native plantings at Marshall Park, and volunteers from another group at Hudson Park that removed woody vegetation from the shoreline.
- Completed a successful volunteer day at Warner Beach in partnership with Clean Lake Alliance. Planted over 1,200 plugs.
- Worked on invasive species control in all Tier 1 Managed Meadows and some higher-priority Tier 2 Managed Meadows.

Mall Concourse:

- Removed spring flowers from planters and planted summer annuals with support from Olbrich Gardens staff. This annual support is much appreciated and a great example of Parks teamwork.
- Due to continued dry weather, work focused on watering plants, trees, and flowers daily, and on power washing amenities (bus stops, benches, etc.).
- Placed benches and flower planters on the Capitol Square where the bus shelters were removed in preparation for Bus Rapid Transit.
- Supported preparation and some additional clean-up for events including Cows on the Concourse, Cars on State, and a Live on King Concert.

Community Services Report July 2023 – Terrence Thompson**Community Events (Kelly Post & Debra Alleyne)****Events:**

- June officially kicked off our event season with a record number of June Park Event permits. It's always great to see the wide variety of events highlighting our Madison communities. We had multiple runs/walks, concerts almost daily in various parks and City streets, kids' fishing days, festivals, day camps, and neighborhood gatherings.
- Some iconic annual Madison events were: Loop the Lake, Juneteenth, Sessions at McPike Park, Live on King Street, Cows on the Concourse, and Make Music Madison with performances scheduled in over 100 locations!

Parks Alive:

- We would like to welcome Debra Alleyne as the Parks Alive Coordinator and Hollyn Gaffner as the Park Alive AASPIRE Intern. Debra and Hollyn started on May 30, 2023 and have hit the ground running.
- Parks Alive began on June 20 in Aldo Leopold Park. Approximately 140 participants and 9 local organizations were present doing activities with the community members and sharing information. The second event occurred on June 26 at Allied Park. There were approximately 70 participants and 12 organizations present.
- At both events, the participants were identified as from the neighborhood where the event was held. There was interest in attending future events and plans to participate in other events with friends.
- Due to unprecedented air quality issues, 3 Parks Alive events have been canceled from 6/27 – 6-29. The Parks Alive team is streamlining the notification system to ensure that the community and community partners are adequately notified of unforeseen changes in the schedule.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (Zach Watson)

Facility:

- **WPCRC Expansion update:** The WPCRC project schedule will be delayed to finish the Madison Metro Electric Bus Project. The WPCRC Expansion will go to bid in January 2024, and we anticipate construction beginning in April 2024

Programs & Events:

- WPCRC's June Family Fun Night on Friday, June 16th, welcomed 117 participants.
- WPCRC's KNOW Program partnership with the Madison Parks Foundation has continued to expand its collaborative programming to include; hosting weekly East High School Varsity Basketball off-season training sessions, hosting the Sustain Dane's Powerful Teen Leadership and Employment program, as well as offering cooking classes. These partnerships have allowed our KNOW Program participants to continue regular programming while MSCR provides summer kids camps.

Recreation Services & Aquatics (Tracey Hartley)

Events:

- Movie training with staff has been completed, and movies are underway. On 7/21, the Learn to Fish event at Wingra Park had a full roster with people on the waiting list that we were able to add.

Aquatics:

- The pool is open and we have been busy. 10 new lifeguards joined the staff after completing the Lifeguard training class held by Shane and other pool staff. We are still short lifeguards and conducting more interviews after the July 4 holiday.
- The All-City Swim meet is scheduled at the Goodman Pool on July 27-29. We are seeking volunteers to help ensure a successful event. Notification cards will be mailed out to neighbors to inform them of the event happening in their neighborhood. The Goodman Waves Swim team has held two home meets this summer, and the Dive team has also had a home meet.

Customer Service (Joanne Austin)

Mooring Update:

- 30 mooring spaces on Lake Mendota off Marshall Park.
- 26 paid and under agreement with Madison Parks.
- 4 not assigned, 3 of which claimed and will be filled soon.
- 70 people on the waitlist.

Watercraft Update (canoes, kayaks, paddleboards):

- BB Clarke –18 spots (all filled), 32 on the waitlist
- Burrows –18 spots (all filled), 13 on the waitlist
- Cherokee Park –24 spots (all filled), 21 on the waitlist
- Cherokee Marsh –18 spots (all filled), 28 on the waitlist
- Esther Beach –6 spots (all filled), 21 on the waitlist
- James Madison –42 spots (all filled), 12 on the waitlist
- Law –6 spots (all filled), 17 on the waitlist
- Marshall –60 spots (all filled), 8 on the waitlist
- Merrill Springs –18 spots (all filled), 31 on the waitlist
- Olbrich (all on the creek side) – 56 spots (all filled), 66 on the waitlist
- Olin –24 spots (all filled), 21 on the waitlist
- Paunack –12 spots (all filled), 13 on the waitlist
- Spring Harbor – 19 spots (all filled), 34 on the waitlist
- Tenney – 69 spots (68 filled, with 1 damaged and cannot be assigned), 34 on the waitlist
- Vilas – 24 spots (all filled), 53 on the waitlist
- Warner – 12 spots (all filled), 8 on the waitlist

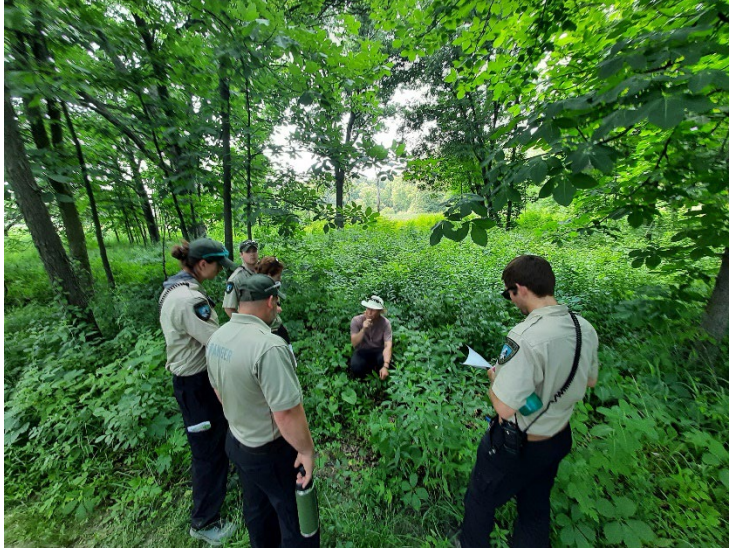
Note: Some individuals are on multiple watercraft location waitlists.

Permits Update (Disc Golf, Dog, Lake Access, and Ski): Here are the quantities of permits sold as of June 29. Look closely at how these totals have significantly increased since June 5. Staff assign unique permit numbers to each annual permit purchased and mail them to customers as quickly as possible. As you can imagine, we are busy!

ANNUAL PERMITS	2021	2022	as of 6/5/23	as of 6/29/23	DAILY PERMITS	2021	2022	as of 6/5/23	as of 6/29/23
Disc Golf	2,384	2,179	1,726	1,942	Disc Golf	3,045	2,760	605	923
Dog (Park/Reg)	11,100	8,868	7,734	8,038	Dog (Park/Reg)	261	228	73	88
Lake Access	6,956	5,998	2,649	3,683	Lake Access	2,173	2,473	552	1,116
Ski Trail	3,632	2,608	1,905	1,905	Ski Trail	1,150	421	472	472

Rangers & Volunteers (Jason Vroman)

- Rangers completed a flora and fauna ID hike with Conservation Supervisor Paul Quinlan at Edna Taylor Conservation Park. Rangers often are asked about local land management initiatives, plant or animal species, and more. This was the first of a series of informational hikes to better equip Rangers with the knowledge to pass on to the community and park users.



- We are excited to welcome our new Parks Volunteer Coordinator, John Weichelt, to the team. John's first day was Monday, June 26, 2023. John brings 9 years of volunteer coordinating experience from the Madison Senior Center to his new role with Parks. Welcome John!

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

Thai Fest Returned



On Sunday, June 25, 2023 Olbrich Botanical Gardens hosted Thai Fest with the Thai Consulate of Chicago. This event was in celebration of the 190th Anniversary of the diplomatic relationship between the United States of America and Thailand. Thai community members, nearly 100 people, from Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago came together to perform a variety of musical and dance performers. Local musicians Adem Tefanye performed as well including a jam session with the Thai musicians viewable at this [link](#). Thai community members also hosted two traditional cultural crafts in the Frautschi Family Learning Center. Over 2,600 people attended the festivities. Special guests to the event included the Consul-General Natnapang Damrongsoontornchai from The Royal Thai Consulate – General and President Jomgphong Mongkhonvanit from the UW Alumni Thailand Chapter.

Press coverage for the event included:

Channel 3000: https://www.channel3000.com/video/celebration-at-olbrich-botanical-gardens-honors-u-s--thai-relations/video_1bd1aa93-5a50-560b-9d58-cb6c97fecb1b.html

Spectrum News: <https://spectrumnews1.com/wi/milwaukee/news/2023/06/25/sala-thai-festival--celebrating-190-years-of-u-s--and-thai-relations#>

NBC 15: <https://www.nbc15.com/video/2023/06/26/olbrich-botanical-gardens-hosts-sala-thai-festival/>

NBC 15: <https://www.nbc15.com/2023/06/25/olbrich-botanical-gardens-hosts-sala-thai-festival/>

Corpse Flower



The Bolz Conservatory hosted another corpse flower bloom on June 9-10, 2023. This specimen grew to a height of 80" tall! It started to bloom late afternoon on Friday, June 9, 2023 and started to close mid-day on Saturday, June 10, 2023. For this bloom, the viewing was offered by timed tickets available online and walk-ups accepted when space was available. This change greatly improved the experience for all as the lines were very limited due to the timed entry.

Hmong Garden

Sabrina Herr was an intern with Olbrich Botanical Gardens during the summer of 2022 from Madison College. As an intern, she learned about and worked in the Indigenous Garden in the Herb Garden. This experience sparked an interest in the plants her family uses in their cultural and cooking practices. In conversations with Herb Garden Horticulturist Erin Presley, she talked

about the plants important to her culture and community. This was the birth of this summer's Hmong Garden in the Herb Garden. Starting this past winter, Sabrina began working with Erin in planning and designing the Hmong Garden. She assisted with plant selection and design, interpretive signage, and creation of educational programs and tours for the garden. Don't miss the opportunity to visit this special garden. The Hmong Garden is now thriving in the Herb Garden at Olbrich Gardens.

State Street

Once again, Olbrich Botanical Garden staff and interns created botanical displays for the planters on State Street.

